

peacemail

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 7

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act for peace
reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



Twelve months after the open hostilities between Israel and its occupied territory of the Gaza Strip, the rebuilding continues. About two thirds of Gaza's 1.4 million people, in just 365 sq. kms, are internally displaced and living in refugee camps. 80% are unemployed and even more live below the poverty line. Crime is on the rise.

There are more than 5.5 million Palestinian refugees, four million of whom are officially registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Most live in communities subject to indiscriminate Israeli military control in the occupied territories of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Others reside in surrounding countries or live permanently overseas. Arriving at a peaceful and just resolution to the refugee issue is critical to creating durable peace between

Israelis and Palestinians. Unfortunately, even as negotiations progress, the situation for Palestinian refugees gets worse. The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches works to relieve their plight. 15,000 families were served by their Gaza clinics through primary health care activities over the last 12 months.

\$15 can provide milk for a malnourished child or treat a child with a respiratory infection.

\$70 can provide a course of treatment for an anaemic child.

\$285 can support laboratory testing for up to 50 patients.

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

"The Christmas Bowl People!"



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THANK YOU Partners for your commitment to Act for Peace through your regular gifts. Thank you for your generosity, especially those who have chosen to increase the amount of their giving. Together, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict and extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101** or email hgraham@ncca.org.au. Also, all feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners.

On the other hand, if you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to be, or would just like to help this project, your call or email will be welcomed!

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Vital Health Work Restored in Gaza

Dear Partner, I really like to visit the new Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) Clinic, which opened in May 2009 in my Shija'ia neighbourhood of Gaza City. It's not far from the old clinic, which was bombed on 10 January 2009. That clinic served us for many years, but is now nothing but a block-long pile of rubble.

I am Suheil and this morning I took my 14 month old son, Mohammad, for his second visit to monitor his anaemia. I am married and have five children less than nine years of age. My whole family receives care at the clinic.

Today was one of the twice-weekly Well Baby Clinics. When I came last time, Mohammad, like all the children on their first visit, had an overall assessment. He and the other children under the age of five were enrolled into the Nutrition and Anaemia program, which tracks the nutritional status of thousands of young children in Shija'ia. Mohammad's growth will now be checked monthly and entered into the modern computer database to see whether he is growing well or if he is malnourished. His blood count will also be checked. Malnourished children and those like Mohammad with anaemia (I'm told about 40% suffer from this) will receive nutritional counselling, food supplements and iron treatment.

I have not worked since 2000 when I lost my job as it was outside the Gaza Strip and access was closed. Now I stay at home or walk the street, hoping for some kind of employment and income to support my family. There are few work opportunities in our region where unemployment is now approaching 80%.

I often stop to talk to people I know and watch neighbourhood life. Movement is mostly by foot or donkey cart; petrol and cars are still precious commodities. This morning, I met Samira who took her five year old daughter, Falastine, to the clinic for her last visit under the Nutrition and Anemia program. Falastine has eight brothers and sisters, all of whom are cared for at the clinic along with the rest of the family. Samira has been coming to the DSPR Clinic for years. She agrees with me that the people there are so nice. Everyone is treated the same and with respect. Also, the clinic has all the medicines and can take care of any health problem my family faces. Samira's husband does not have a job either, yet the clinic still provides a way for her family to have access to the health care they require.

Thank you for helping to build the new clinic and for gifts to provide stocks of medicines. Without the clinic, I would have nothing. I thank God for this assistance. I know that Mohammad's anaemia will be well cared for.



Shija'ai Clinic



Suheil with Mohammed at the clinic

Partner's Prayer Points:

Give thanks for the humanitarian work of the Middle East Council of Churches.

Pray for peace in the region, respect for human rights and just solutions for refugees and displaced people.

Suheil

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